

AN
EPISTLE
1508/1000.

TO THE

NATIONAL MEETING

OF

FRIENDS,

IN

DUBLIN,

Concerning good ORDER and DISCIPLINE in
the CHURCH.

Written by JOSEPH PIKE.

WILMINGTON,

Re-printed by JAMES ADAMS, 1783.



E P I S T L E

T O T H E

NATIONAL MEETING, &c.

My dearly beloved Friends, and Brethren,

HAVING been for some Time under a *deep and mournful* Sense of the States of many of the Churches of Christ, a *weighty* Concern came upon my Spirit, to communicate some of those Things to you which came under my Consideration, and I could not be easy until I had given up to do it; and as I foresee what I shall write will be *long*, and the *longer* by *commemorating* the Dealings of the LORD with us in *this* Nation, as well as by writing some Things *new* and *old*: So therefore, I desire you will bear its Length, it being, in Probability, the last Time that ever I shall write to you, for I am but *weak* in Body, and *ill* able to write at this Time; and, in all *human Prospect*, not likely to continue long in this World. But however that
may

may be, Oh ! faith my Soul, that the Lord will be pleased to keep and preserve me *near* to himself to the End, that so in the End of my Time, I may attain to that everlasting Rest, that the ELDERS, who have gone before me, are already entered into.

And now, my *dear Friends*, I herewith send you the Salutation of my *endeared* Love in our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, which remains as *fresh* and *fervent* with me now in *old* Age, as in my *Youth*, more especially to you that travel in *Spirit*, and are zealously concerned for the Welfare and Prosperity of SION, you are as *near* and *dear* to me as ever, and I have Unity with you, in the *Covenant* of Love and Life, whether you are *old* or *young*, *rich* or *poor* ; for in this Love it is that we are bound up together in the Bundle of Life, being *baptized by one Spirit into one Body*, and in this Love which proceeds from the Spirit, the true Unity of the Church is kept up and maintained in the *Bond of Peace*, whereby the *whole Body* is *edified* together in Love, which you know is a *stronger* Bond and Tye than all *outward* Laws, Creeds, or Confessions of Faith *without it*.

And besides this Gift of the HOLY SPIRIT, which CHRIST has given us for our Salvation, he has given *additional* Means and Assistances *conducive* to that great End ; thus he has afforded us the HOLY SCRIPTURES for our *Information*, *Edification* and *Comfort*, thro' the Spirit. He has sent us his *Ministers* and *Messengers*, whom he has furnished with the *immediate* Power of his Word : He has gifted ELDERS to *oversee*, *advise* and *admonish* us, and, by his holy Spirit, he has moved upon both Ministers and Elders, to give forth and
leave



leave us *holy Instructions*, for keeping *godly Order* and Discipline in the Churches of CHRIST, to be as an *Hedge and Fence* about us for our Preservation (so far as Means can do) in this Unity of the Spirit, as well as to keep us from the *Inroads of the Enemy, who goes about continually seeking whom he may devour.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.

Our gracious LORD has done all this for us in our Day and Time, as he did formerly, so that we may truly say with that holy Prophet *Isaiah*, who spoke from the Mouth of the Lord, saying, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it.* Isa. 5. 4. And I pray God it may not be said of many of us now as he said to *Israel* then, viz. *Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes.*

Now, my dear Friends, that which bears the greatest Weight upon my Spirit at this Time, is, relating to *godly Order and Discipline* in the Churches of Christ: And tho' I well know that you who have retained your *first Love* to God, and have kept your Habitation in his *holy Truth*, do not want any Information of mine to convince you of the *Necessity and Service* thereof; yet as out of the *Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*, so out of the abundant Concern I feel upon my Spirit for the Prosperity of Truth, I beseech you bear with me while I ease my Mind, if it but prove of the least Benefit to the Younger in your Meeting, by stirring up the *pure Mind by way of Remembrance*; for notwithstanding I am very sensible that some of you do want but little stirring up to your Duty, respecting Discipline, yet I believe many others

others do. Neither do you want to be convinced that our *Women's*, as well as *Men's*, Meetings for Discipline, were *first* set up by the *Movings* of the L O R D's Power, through that *worthy* and *faithful* Elder GEORGE FOX; and also, that the Authority of these Meetings is to be kept up and maintained therein, you are living Witnesses thereof, because the L O R D has often owned your Services in them by the *Overshadowings* of his *glorious* Power.

You know also, that in the *first Institution* of these our Men's Meetings, the Members of them were to be *faithful Men*, who were to
 Exod. 18. 4. rule and govern for the L O R D, *Men* *fearing* G O D, and *hating* *Covetousness*, agreeable to those in the Apostles Times, whom the HOLY G H O S T had made *Overseers* in the Church of C H R I S T; yet this does not exclude *bonest minded* young Men from being admitted to sit in those Meetings *as Learners*, who, growing in Truth, may at length come to have their *spiritual* Senses exercised, so as rightly to discern between *Good* and *Evil*, and *Things that differ*, tho' at first they may not see into Things *so clearly* as the *faithful* Elders did, yet as they grow in Truth, and *follow* *them*, as the Apostle Paul advises, the
 Phil. 3. 15. Lord in due Time will reveal such Things unto them. I can speak this from my own Experience; likewise, in a more general Way, as there are, and always will be, *different* Degrees of Growth in the Members of the Church of C H R I S T, yet as all are *growing* in Truth, and drawing *one Way*, and aiming at the *same* Thing, namely the *Honour of the* L O R D, and Prosperity of

of his *holy* Truth, there will be a *general* Condescension and Submission to one another, but more especially to *godly* Elders and Overseers; here the *strong* and *Self-will* of Man is kept out, and the Unity of the *Spirit*, in an *heavenly* Harmony, maintained in those Meetings, as well as among the whole Body, or Church of CHRIST.

And while Things remained in this Order, the true *Watchmen* for CHRIST, those Elders, *were* good Examples to the Flock themselves; they diligently watched them, lest the Enemy should steal in upon them; and when at any Time he made an Appearance, they gave the Alarm to the Flock to beware of the Devourer: Thus, if any Thing did appear *contrary* to Truth, of what Kind soever, then, presently (without Delay) those *true Watchmen* did endeavour to put a Stop thereto; then it was that Things went well in general in the Churches of CHRIST. I could enlarge abundantly upon the good Effects of it, but stop myself, and in a few Words say, *That then the Disorderly were dealt with in due Time, according to the Nature of their Offences, and for their Good: And if they could not be reclaimed, they were set in their Places, Truth cleared, and they made as Examples to others, and then those Examples in some Measure became a Terror to such who were inclined and ready to follow their disorderly Steps, by which Means many, I believe, were deterred therefrom: And thus holy Discipline was kept in its right Channel, and, above all, the LORD was pleased to own those Services with his heavenly Power.*

But alas! alas! The State of Things continued in this Condition but a few Years before the Enemy
of

of all Righteousness made Attempts to break down the *Fence* of Discipline, which had been set up by the Power of GOD, and even prevailed on some who had been as *leading* Elders and Ministers to be concerned therein (such who once knew better Things) but had departed from their *first* Love to Truth, and Zeal for it; these Men, with their *libertine* Company in our bordering Nation, did rise up against that *Man* of God, G. Fox, who had been made the Instrument, in the Hand of the LORD, to let up good Order and Discipline; they levelled their Rage and Malice against him in particular, with those who had kept their *first* Love in general: But their *chief* End was to lay waste, and destroy this good Order and Discipline, and leave every one to do as they pleased, and would have no Bounds set, with this *plausible* Pretence, that all must be left to the Light in their Consciences, and Friends must wait until they are convinced, that such and such Things were *contrary* to Truth, tho' even many of the Things they went into, the *Light* of CHRIST led the *true* Followers of it out of, and to testify against, *in the Beginning*. This was pleasing Doctrine to *Libertines*; it took with them, and they made use of it, and thereupon went into *wrong* Liberty, as *Height, Pride, Fashions* of the *World, Stiff-neckedness, Strife, Contention*, and so *unruly*, that they would not submit their Differences to Friends, with many other Things *contrary* to Truth, too long to enumerate; and yet all this under a Pretence of *Christian Liberty*, and that they were not convinced by the *Light* in their Consciences to the contrary. In short, the Rebellion and (Confederacy against good

good Order in the Church) was very great and strong, and in some Places they set up *separate* Meetings; but the LORD brought a *Blas*t upon that Spirit, and they came to nothing, as a Body of People; yet notwithstanding this, the Seeds, which they had sown in this Time of *undue* Liberty remained, and still remain amongst many, in some Places, and in this Time it was that some of those Seeds were brought into this Nation, by Examples from them, and in particular *Height* and *Finery* in *Apparel* and *Hou*shold *Stu*ff, with some other Things, of which I am presently to speak.

Tho' I was but a *young Man* then, yet an *Eye* and *Ear* Witness of many of those Things, having been at several of the Meetings in *England*, wherein this *libertine* Spirit raised Contention, and then I clearly saw the Tendency thereof, that it would, if possible, lay waste the whole *Heritage* of GOD, and I bore my Testimony against it, as *convenient* Seasons and Opportunities offered.

I have written after this Manner to shew how good Order and Discipline was set up and established in a general Way, and what Spirit it was that opposed it then, and I greatly fear the same Spirit is at work now, in this Nation, tho' in a different Appearance, not by their opposing all Discipline in a general Manner as they did, but by breaking of Minutes, and weakening the Hands of the *Faithful*, who are *zealously* concerned in Spirit for the Promotion of Truth, and keeping up the Discipline thereof in its *right* Line.

Now, in opening these Things, I find I shall be still led on in an *historical* Manner, and therefore desire your Patience, and tho' it tend not to the

Information of you *faithful* Elders in *Israel*, who know them already, yet it may be to the Younger, by *commemorating* the kind Dealings of the LORD towards us, and stirring up the *pure* Mind in them, and that none of us may be ungrateful to him, for all the Benefits and Labour that he has bestowed upon us.

I have already said that some of the Seeds, which that libertine Spirit had sown, were brought over into this Nation, and particularly that of *Height and Finery in Apparel and Household Furniture, &c.* And by exempling one another, they came to a great Height at last, tho' not to that Degree, as in the other Nation, but we are going fast into them.

Now, upon this Occasion, I must revive the Memory of that *Worthy* Elder, *William Edmundson*, of this Nation, whose Memory and Labours live, and are sweet to the *upright* in Heart, and who (as most of you well know) was *eminently* instrumental in the Hand of the LORD, not only in a *powerful* Ministry by Word and Doctrine, but also for establishing and maintaining *good* Order and Discipline in the Churches of CHRIST. He *zealously* and with *undaunted* Courage stood up *faithfully* for the LORD and his Cause, and opposed all *false* Liberty in its *first* Appearance, and was, to my *certain* Knowledge, much grieved, when he saw it growing in this Nation, and faithfully bore his Testimony against it, *without Favour or Affection*, and tho' he did so, and that many Epistles and Minutes went forth from our Half-year Meeting, against that *libertine* Spirit of *Height, Pride, and other Things*, that had

had grown upon us, yet all did not prove fully effectual, until at last the L O R D blest his *unwearied* Endeavours with Success, as a *chief* Instrument in the Hand of G O D, for putting *godly* Discipline in *due* and *close* Execution, by which Means a Stop was put to that Spirit, in *great* Measure, until he was taken from us, and it is now about Thirty Years since the L O R D raised up and spirited many *godly* Elders to join with him as one Man, in this Work of *Reformation*, and thereupon Epistles were given forth from Half-years Meetings, which named Abundance of Superfluities, in *Apparel, House Furniture, garnishing of Houses, &c.* with *numerous* other Things relating to *Conversation* and *Behaviour*, and running *greedily* after the Things of this World, too long to enumerate, and which may be seen in those Minutes; and for the more effectual performing this Work, they directed us to chuse out *right spirited* Friends, who had a concern upon them for the Prosperity of Truth, and putting away all those Things that were as *Nuisances* in the Church, to visit every *particular* Family, to *see, inspect* and *advise* accordingly, as they saw Occasion for it.

Now, about this Time, the L O R D had also raised a Concern in the Minds of the *faithful* Elders, in most Parts of this Nation, and, with them, had likewise been preparing the Hearts of a *younger* and *middle aged* Generation, to join in this Work, and when those Epistles and Minutes came down to this Province, there was a *general* Assent in the Minds of Friends to comply with the Advices they gave us, as seeing the Necessity of

it; and indeed I must confess, I believe that we in this City of *Gork*, were at that Time as much concerned to take the Advice as any in the Nation; for tho' our Wives and Children dressed pretty plain, yet many of them wore *rich costly* Apparel, tho' of grave Colours, and many of our Houses were furnished with *divers* Superfluities, that were not *agreeable* to the Plainness of Truth, and as Truth (I am satisfied) led into, in the Beginning.

However, so it was that the L O R D touched the Hearts of those also, and they joined *Heart and Hand* to the Work, in first cleansing their own Houses and Families from these Things, and after that, as Elders were appointed according to the Advice of the Half-year's Meeting to visit Families, so some of those, the *Younger*, were appointed amongst the Rest; but I well know it was very hard for some of them to give up to it, as thinking the Service too *weighty* for them, but having a Concern upon their Spirits, that the Work should go on, they at last complied, tho' in a Cross to their own Wills, they went in much *Weakness, Fear and Trembling*, but the L O R D (I testify) was with and strengthened them in the Service. I write this for the Encouragement of all *honest hearted young Persons*, such who are concerned in Spirit for the Prosperity of Truth, and that think themselves very weak, and thereby are *too backward* in such Services, which the *faithful* Elders in the Church of G O D shall think them measurably capable of.

It is with me to let the *Younger* know how Friends proceeded in their Visits; and this I do, in order

order to stir up their Minds by way of Information and Encouragement. The Visitors chosen *first* met together, and, in the Love of G O D, without *Partiality*, examined one another, how far they stood *clear* themselves, relating to the Things about which they were going to advise others; and, after due Examination proceeded thus: When we came to a Family, we sat down with them, and first waited a while upon the L O R D, and then, as it arose in the Minds of any, we principally in the first Place directed them to the Gift of the L O R D's Spirit in themselves, as that by which *alone* they could grow in the Truth, and which would lead them in outward Things, agreeable thereto, as to *Conversation, Behaviour and Plainness of Apparel and Speech*, &c. as it fell our Elders in the Beginning; and that altho' these Things were very *commendable* in their Places, yet told them they would not do *of themselves*, except the Heart was also right in the Sight of the L O R D: And having spoken what was in our Minds, according to the State of the Family we visited (sometimes all together, and sometimes particularly apart, as we saw Occasion for it) we then came to the Minutes from our Half-year's Meeting, and spoke particularly to them.

And this I may tell you of a Truth, that in all those Visits we made in this City at that Time we met with no *Opposition or Contradiction* in any one Family or particular Person, that I remember, but a *general* Condescension in all, and sometimes a *free and open* Confession of Things that had been amiss, and that in *great* Tenderness, with Hopes of Amendment for the future; so that the
Visitors

Visitors and Visited had *great* Satisfaction in that Service; and this I may further tell you, above all, the L O R D owned our Service, by favouring us with his holy Power therein, so that in some Families, where Things were well, the L O R D overshadowed us by his *living* Presence, and melted us down together, as into one Lump; *May my Soul never forget those Times, while I have a Day to live in this World!*

Now, after those Visits were over in this City, in convenient Time most of those Visitors here did accompany some other *faithful* Elders in the Province, and they went through it, visiting the Families of Friends, like as they had done in this City, which had much the *same* Effects as here, there being a *general* Condescension to comply with the Desire of the Half-year's Meeting; and accordingly, in Time, there was (I think I may say) a pretty full and *effectual* Reformation in this Province in outward Things that had been amiss, and which that Meeting desired might be put away, and I understand the like Success attended that Service in other Parts of this Nation; and thus Things stood for several Years, and there was *great* Unity among Friends of this Province in particular, as well as in general throughout the Rest of the Kingdom, and the L O R D was pleased therewith, which he manifested oftentimes by the *Overflowing* of his *divine Power* in the Meetings of Friends.

I confess, my dear Friends, my writing after this Manner looks rather like an *History* or *Narrative*, than an Epistle, but I desire you will bear with me, it being to magnify the *loving Kindness* of

of the LORD in (rehearsing) his Dealings with us, and for the Information and Encouragement of the *Younger*, that they may follow the Steps of the *worthy Antients*, who have followed Christ, and shun and avoid that *libertine* Spirit, which I fear is now getting in, and has got in again, endeavouring to throw down and lay waste what our *godly Elders* had reared up by the *Power* of the LORD, and from this Fear I am led to query after this Manner.

Are there not some in Being who not only saw those Times of *outward* Reformation, but also heartily joined therein, by putting away out of their Houses and Families those Superfluities in *Fineness of Apparel* and *Houſhold Furniture*, &c? I am satisfied there are. Or are there any who, since that Time, have owned that Concern, and for a Time stood zealous for the Plainness of Truth? I am persuaded there are. And now I query, are there any of late Times, of both Sorts, who have lost that former Zeal, and suffered or permitted some of the *same or greater Superfluities in Apparel and Dress to be worn by their Children, and in their Families*; and likewise have suffered or permitted as *fine or finer House Furniture and Garnishing to come into their own Houses, or their Children's*, which I am satisfied they might have prevented, by zealously standing against it; and moreover, have they not connived at others that have gone into such Things? I fear there are such.

Now, by these and the like Means, and by taking Examples from one another, the Seeds of *Height, Pride, and Vanity*, have grown and spread, more (among us) than ever they were before that Time

Time of *Reformation*, to the Wounding and Grieving of the Souls of the upright in Heart. Ah! *Friends, Friends*, I have this to say to you, from the Movings of the Spirit of the L O R D in my Heart, how will you answer it in the Day of Account? You, I say, that by your *Easiness* and *Luke-warmness*, have let in those offensive Things upon us again; for as our blessed Lord said, *Who so shall offend one of these little* Mat. 18. 6,
Ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea. What will be the Portion of such as these? Therefore let all who are concerned herein repent, and do their *first* Works, before it be too late.

Again, besides *Height, Pride* and *Fashions*, which have (I fear) appeared in too many with a *daring* Face, are there not some that have very much lost, or been ashamed of, the *plain* Language both in *speaking* and *writing*.

I further query, Are there not some who have gone into *undue* Liberty of many Kinds, and others that would be accounted *something*, who have gone into *Contentions, Broils* and *Differences*, (through a *covetous* and *selfish* Spirit) to the Trouble of the Church? I wish there may not. But I cannot well pass by that *evil* Spirit of *Covetousness* without the following Remark: "It is an
 " abominable Evil in the Sight of the L O R D,
 " C H R I S T himself severely reprehended it,
 " and cautioned to beware thereof; his *holy* A-
 " postles called it *Idolatry*, and the former Pro-
 " phets cried out against it; as did in like
 " Manner

“Manner that *worthy* Elder *William Edmundson*
 “(herein before mentioned) often warning us to
 “beware thereof; where it takes *deep* Root in
 “the Heart, it is a *merciless* devouring Spirit, not
 “only endeavouring to *devour* others, but even
 “destroy that *Man himself* who gives Way there-
 “to, and very little can stand before it, therefore
 “beware thereof wherever it appears.”

And lastly, besides what I have queried above,
 I here query in a more general Manner, Are there
 not some who were once very zealous, and stood
 against all those Things I have mentioned, and if
 they had kept their Habitations in the L O R D's
holy Truth, might have been made serviceable
 Instruments in his Hand, and as *bright* Stars
 in the *Firmament* of his Power, and have join-
 ed *Hand in Hand*, and put *Shoulder to Shoulder*, in
 helping the *Faithful* to keep out those Things;
 and by which Means I am persuaded they would
 in great Measure have been kept out: I say, Are
 there not some of those (tho' I hope not many)
 that now of late Years have been *faulty* in some
 of those Things themselves, and others who have
 stood *easy*, and *unconcerned* in Mind, while they
 have seen and beheld some that were going into
 them, and instead of helping the zealous and up-
 right in Heart, have rather *clogged* and *weakned* their
 Hands, by *openly* or *secretly* abetting the Cause of
 the wrong Spirited and the Disorderly, so far as they
 were able, and thereby have sometimes fended off
 the Stroke of Justice and Judgment, in the Way
 of Discipline (and hindred the Line thereof) from
 being stretched over such *in due Time*, according
 to the Nature of their Offences: *For if right Times*
be

be not observed, right Services may be lost. Whereas, if true Discipline had been duly and rightly executed, it might probably have tended to the *Good of such Offenders themselves*; as well as the *detering others* from following their Steps; but, above all, it would have kept up, and established good Order and Discipline in its right Line in the Church of CHRIST.

The breaking or obstructing this right Line of Discipline has (I fear) produced a *partial* conniving amongst some; for have not the *Easy, Luke-warm, and Indifferent* (who have lost their first Love) daubed with *untempered* Mortar, while they have endeavoured to screen and defend the *Covetous, and Troublers* of the Church? And, on the other Hand, have not such joined with the *luke-warm* Daubers, when they have been justly found Fault withal, and then both Sorts have been easy with the *High, Proud and Libertines*, who also in *their turn* (as they had Opportunity) defended the Rest; and thus they have strengthened one another, contrary to that *most solemn* Charge which the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy, in Relation to the Management of the Church Affairs, viz. *I charge thee* (says he) *before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST and the elect Angels, that thou observe these Things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality,* 1 Tim. v. 21. Such as these are Men for GOD, and *right Judges* for Him. They cannot swerve or be *partial* to any Party, Person, or even nearest Relations, for *Favour, Affection, or worldly Ends*; but as to those who are *easy, luke-warm, partial or cold,* or such that are *Troublers of the Church*.

Church of G O D, and who *once knew better Things*, I have this in my Heart to say (if there be any such, as I fear there are) the L O R D's Controversy is against them, whether they pretend to be *Teachers* of others, or as *Elders*, and he will dreadfully plead with *such* above others, for they may not only have their *own Blood* to answer for, but also the *Blood* of others; therefore repent *in Time*, before it be *too late*. If any one shall think me *too sharp* in what I write, I may tell them it is no pleasing Work to me, for I do it in a Cross to my own Will, but the Day calls for *plain Dealing*, and I must discharge my Conscience.

But as for you, *my dear Friends*, who have retained your *first Love* to G O D, and have stood *zealous* for the L O R D and his Truth, whether you are *Ministers* or *Elders*, *young or old*, what I write touches you not; therefore I verily believe you will not be offended at it, for you can discern from what Spirit I write: But notwithstanding I have enumerated so many *hurtful Things* which have prevailed upon some that have been *unwatchful*, yet I hope none will mistake me so far as that thereby I mean the Generality of Friends, which I am far from doing; for I believe, and know, that the Lord has still a *faithful People* in this Nation, which I hope he will preserve to the End.

Moreover, I have this in particular to say to you that go *mourning* under the Burden of those Things I have mentioned, be not *too much* discouraged tho' some of your Brethren, that should have helped you, have left you, it was so of old; remember that great Servant of the L O R D, *Moses*, how often he

he was brought into great Straits, by Oppositions he met with from *rebellious Israel*, yet the L O R D stood by him, and carried him through to the End. Remember the *Prophets, Elijah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah*, with others, who sometimes thought they stood alone, yet the L O R D stood by them, and likewise carried them through. Remember *Paul*, who said to *Timothy* upon Occasion, that *no Man stood with him, and all they of Asia* 2 Tim. i. 15. *turned from him*, and he oftentimes met with great Opposition and Discouragements, yet the L O R D stood by him, and carried him through: These may be as Examples and Encouragements to you; therefore slack not your Hands, be not dismayed because of Oppositions and Discouragements you meet withal, stand your Ground, and be zealous for the L O R D and his Testimony, and though *you cannot do all you desire, yet do all you can for him*, and the L O R D will stand by you, as he did by them formerly.

Dear Friends, there is another Thing of great Consequence that I have not yet mentioned, which has done Abundance of Mischief in the Church, and that is the *Fondness and Indulgence* of many *Parents* to their *Children*, in giving them their own Way and Wills so long, until the Root of Evil has grown and spread itself forth into many *evil Branches*, and at length they have been so alienated from Truth and Friends, that some of them have run quite out. I could enlarge abundantly upon the *evil Effects* of this *fond Indulgence*, but that I have been so large already on other Matters, and that we have so many Minutes against it.

However

However I say, that tho' some godly Parents have discharged their Duty to their Children, which has not had the desired Effect, yet they will be clear of their Blood; but I believe too many have not performed their Duty, by which Neglect their Children have taken wrong Liberty, and fallen into hurtful Things; such Parents must be accountable for it in the Day of the L O R D.

I have already spoken of admitting *young* Men into *Men's* Meetings, but have this to add (not as your Director) but as believing it is what Truth will lead all *right spirited* Friends into in every Quarter, *viz.* To be very careful not to admit of any unless they come under these following Qualifications. First, They should be *sober* and *orderly* in their Conversations. Secondly, they should be *plain* and *exemplary* in their Habit, Apparel and Dressing; likewise *no Tatlers*. And thirdly, that so far as Friends can have a Sense of their Spirits, that they will be *condescending to godly Elders*, and not either in their Words or Spirits likely to oppose them, for I have observed in my Time, that some, who have been admitted, without these Qualifications, have in Time proved *great* Troublers of the Church, especially if they have had *fluent* Tongues, which I have beheld in some Places (in my former Travels) *to the Grief of my Soul.*

Another Thing I may observe to you, that we have a *great* many *young* and *middle-aged* Men amongst us, who are *orderly* in their Conversations, and also wish well to the Prosperity of Truth, and yet are (as I may term it) either *indolent*, or too much incumbered in the Things of

of this World, and thereby are backward in coming up into *that Service* for Truth, which otherwise they might be capable of, were their *spiritual* Senses rightly exercised, but by their being *so backward* their Senses grow (as it were) *dull*, for Want of Use, and I believe it will become the Duty of *godly Elders* in all the Meetings where such are, to *stir* them up to *mind the Gift* that is in them, or if Need be, even to *rouse* them up to their Duties, as well for their *own Good*, as the *Service* they may have for the Truth.

And now, *dear Friends*, I am come near to an End of this very long Epistle, and tho' I have been *thus large* already, yet *one* Thing more, bears Weight upon my Mind, and I could not be *easy* without touching upon it, which if it shall only tend to a *Caution* of the Younger, my End will be answered; and that is relating to the *close Joining* in Familiarity with any *dark opposite* and *unruly* Spirits; you know we have Minutes against it; and the Apostle *Paul* was of the same Mind, when he advised to *have no Company with any who obeyed not their Word*, by that Epistle, 2 Thes. iii. 14. 16. yet in that Case adviseth not to *count such an Enemy*, but *admonish him as a Brother*, but positively commands, in the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to *withdraw from every Brother that walked disorderly, and not after the Tradition received of the Apostle, &c.* 2 Thes. iii. 6. and likewise to *have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but reprove them.*

Now, if any of those who walk *orderly*, and
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are in Fellowship with Friends, do contract a very *intimate and unnecessary Familiarity* with Persons of *dark or opposite* Spirits, I believe it will have these following *bad* Effects. First, it may rather strengthen them in that Spirit, than help to reclaim them from their *Opposition*. Secondly, It may harden them in *Prejudice* against those that cannot do the same. Thirdly, It may be of ill *Example*, and tend to the further Hurt of others, who are inclined to follow the Steps of the *Unfaithful*. But beyond all this, in my Time I have observed, that even the *Orderly* themselves have been *greatly* hurt, at last some of them *lost* thereby; for having these Opportunities of *frequent* Conversation together, and by the *continual* buzzing Things against the *Faithful*, the *Orderly* have in length of Time lent an Ear to them, whereby *Surmises* and *Jealousies* have been begotten, then *Hardness* and *Prejudice* have entered; and lastly, a *joining in Confederacy with dark Spirits* against those who have nothing more in their View than the *Honour* of the L O R D, and *Good of Souls*; and by this very Means (even to my own certain Knowledge) many who (at first) were *orderly* and *honest minded*, were caught in this Snare in the Time of the *Separation*, and some taken in the same in this Nation also: Therefore I hope the *Orderly* will observe our Minutes and the Advice and Commands of the Apostles, and if they have Occasion (as they may often) to converse with any of the other Sort, to *keep upon their Watch*, and carry towards them, as to
such

such who are under Admonition, for I am sure Truth will lead thereto.

And now I shall conclude in much brotherly Love, your dear Friend,

JOSEPH PIKE.



F I N I S.

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Colbatch (Sir John) [collections]

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Air, Meat & Drink

Motion & Rest.

Sleep & Watchfulness

a clear Excretion of y^e Excrements

and retention of useful juices

A due Regulation of his Passions